

Security Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 08 September 2003



Daily Overview

- HealthDay reports the West Nile virus surged again across the western half of the United States last week, doubling its death toll and almost doubling the number of people infected by the mosquito-borne virus. (See item 13)
- The Associated Press reports the FBI has issued a worldwide alert for four men linked to al Qaeda: Adnan G. El Shukrijumah, Abderraouf Jdey, Karim El Mejjati, and Zubayr Al–Rimi. (See item 19)
- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security released an advisory Thursday, September 4, regarding "Maintaining Awareness Regarding Al Qaeda's Potential Threats to the Homeland." (See item_23)

DHS/IAIP Update Fast Jump

Production Industries: Energy; Chemical; Defense Industrial Base

Service Industries: Banking and Finance; Transportation; Postal and Shipping

Sustenance and Health: Agriculture; Food; Water; Public Health

Federal and State: Government; Emergency Services

IT and Cyber: Information and Telecommunications; Internet Alert Dashboard

Other: General; DHS/IAIP Web Information

Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: <u>Physical</u>: Elevated, <u>Cyber</u>: Elevated Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES–ISAC) – http://esisac.com]

1. September 05, Government Computer News — Power grid not a primary terror target according to FBI. The FBI is concerned about cyberterror, but bombs remain a bigger danger than bytes, the agency's counterterrorism chief told a joint House Homeland Security subcommittee hearing on last month's Northeast blackout. "We haven't seen any evidence that al Qaeda possesses any sophisticated computer capability," Larry A. Mefford said on Thursday,

September 4. Mefford said the FBI has seen no evidence that a cyberterrorism attack has ever occurred. "Our No. 1 threat today remains al Qaeda," Mefford said. Although its targets are across the board, "we haven't seen any specific or credible threats to date" against the power grid and no specific threats to nuclear power plants. Although the possibility of attacks on power stations and transmission grids is not being ignored, none has materialized so far, said Cofer Black, the State Department's counterterrorism coordinator. "We do know from intelligence collecting activities" that the goal of terrorists continues to be "large—scale attacks that do a lot of damage," Black said. "Most of the effort so far has been to kill lots of people."

Source: http://www.gcn.com/vol1_no1/daily-updates/23433-1.html

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Chemical Sector

Nothing to report.

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

Nothing to report.

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Banking and Finance Sector

2. September 05, startups.co.uk — Companies warned to steer clear of 'virtual' con artists. The Forum of Private Business (FPB) in the United Kingdom has warned small firms to be aware of a new investment scam after several of its members were duped out of nearly £20,000 by a group of unscrupulous con artists. The FPB, which represents nearly 25,000 UK firms, has been alerted to the "complex" scam after several members reported losses. The con involves business owners being called by an individual, usually an American, who will launch into a sales pitch on why the intended victim should invest in a share deal that will result in excellent profits. The company which firms are asked to invest in is named as Sun Biometrics or International Biometrics, with the broker who is offering the deal going by the name of Smith Fairchild, Mackenzie King or Warren and Baker. None of these organizations actually exist and are in fact "virtual companies" that just have a presence on the internet. The FPB has contacted the Office of Fair Trading and the police over the matter, and investigations into the bogus companies are now underway.

Source: http://www.startups.co.uk/newspiece.asp?newsid=3178&zsectionid=188ource=newsnow

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Transportation Sector

- 3. September 05, Transportation Security Administration TSA to require boarding passes at security checkpoints in Spokane International Airport. Starting Monday, September 8, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will begin requiring boarding passes and a government-issued identification at all checkpoints in Washington state's Spokane International Airport. TSA's "Selectee Checkpoint" program enhances security by screening selectees at the security checkpoints where screening equipment and personnel are concentrated. At the 265 airports currently participating in the program, passengers are required to keep their boarding pass and a valid government issued photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport, in hand as they enter the security checkpoint. E-ticket receipts, itineraries and vouchers will no longer provide access through the checkpoints, and boarding passes will no longer be issued at the gates. Boarding passes may be obtained on most airline websites, at ticket counters, through airline computer kiosks, or at most skycap curbside stations. TSA is planning to implement the "Selectee Checkpoint" in all airports by the **first of the year.** The complete list of airports that require passengers to have boarding passes prior to entering the security checkpoint is listed on the website at www.tsa.gov. Source: http://www.tsa.gov/public/display?theme=44&content=679
- 4. September 05, Radio Netherlands War on terror on the high seas. The United States and some of its allies, including the Netherlands, are taking the war against terror to the high seas. The U.S. launched the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in May of this year and so far, eleven nations have signed up. The U.S. plan involves interception, boarding and inspection of ships and aircraft that are suspected of carrying chemical, nuclear or biological weapons. The first planned exercise is due to take place next week. China objects to the initiative, warning that it may not be an efficient way to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and that it may even be illegal. The U.S. Administration rejects concerns that the initiative risks breaking international law. "Where we think we may have gaps in that authority, we are willing to consider seeking additional authorization," John Bolton, Washington's top arms control official said this week, adding one recourse could be to gain approval for action from the UN Security Council.

Source: http://www.rnw.nl/hotspots/html/psi030905.html

- 5. September 05, Associated Press Anti-terrorism center may examine how to decontaminate airplanes. Congress is considering broadening the role of an Alabama-based anti-terrorism center by asking it to train airplane personnel for a possible in-flight viral outbreak, such as SARS. A proposal included in a Senate measure to pay for next year's transportation initiatives would designate \$8.5 million to study cabin decontamination, with \$3.75 million earmarked for the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL. The center has focused on preparing first-responders for terrorism. In developing a decontamination plan, it could be preparing for either an intentional act or naturally occurring viruses. "It's just another wrinkle they can do, and they're very interested in doing," said Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, the Republican chairman of the Transportation Appropriations subcommittee. "Think of all the potential biological weapons, and think of an airplane. I think of it all the time when I fly."

 Source: http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2003/09/05-plane-deconta mination.htm
- **6.** September 05, Associated Press British Airways considers fitting its aircraft with anti-missile technology. A spokesperson for British Airways, speaking on condition of

anonymity, said Friday, "We're currently talking to airline manufacturers to understand the feasibility of deploying anti-missile systems on civilian aircraft. There are a number of issues to be resolved, including whether the current technology in use on military aircraft can be adapted to be used on civilian aircraft." Last month, British Airways suspended flights to Saudi Arabia after local authorities broke up a terror cell that reportedly was plotting an attack on a British plane. At the time, Britain's Department for Transport said it had received "credible intelligence of a serious threat to UK aviation interests in Saudi Arabia." The airline also announced on Friday that it was resuming service to Saudi Arabia this weekend.

Source: http://www.cbc.ca/cp/world/030905/w090556.html

7. September 05, Pacific Business News (Honolulu) — Airline cell phone policies still evolving. Northwest Airlines has changed its cell phone policy to allow passengers to use them as soon as their plane lands. The change is effective immediately, the company said Friday. "We believe this policy change will be a welcome benefit for our passengers," VP Safety and Engineering Ken Hylander said. The move is the latest in a series of announcements by major airlines relaxing rules that once forbade cell phone use on aircraft no matter what. Most major carriers now permit the use of cell phones until doors have closed for departure, and after landing when the seat belt sign has been turned off. The Northwest announcement, taking that last part a step further, is likely to spread to other airlines.

Source: http://pacific.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2003/09/01/da ily67.html

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Postal and Shipping Sector

Nothing to report.

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Agriculture Sector

8. September 05, Minnesota Ag Connection — Drought has reached disaster status. State and federal agriculture officials are estimating that 95 percent of Minnesota's cropland has been damaged by the late summer drought. John Monson, of the U.S. Agriculture Department, said the worst—hit parts of the state include southeast, central and west—central Minnesota. Monson said drought damage in the state is estimated at \$1.1 billion. The latest crop report from the state said corn and soybeans continued to deteriorate. Thirty percent of the soybeans are rated in good or excellent condition. Two weeks ago, 50 percent of the crop was in that category.

Source: http://www.minnesotaagconnection.com/story-state.cfm?Id=782& yr=2003

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Food Sector

Nothing to report.

Water Sector

9. September 04, Durango Herald — Future water shortage. Coloradans will need more water than the state can supply by 2025, given normal conditions, said water officials from around Colorado. "There is no single solution," said Sharon Sherman, a facilitator for an 18-month series of meetings that state water officials hope will lead to cooperative efforts to solve problems. A range of representatives from public and private entities met Wednesday to pitch ideas on how to satisfy the water demands of Colorado over the next three decades. Kirk Allen, with Southwest Land Services, suggested exploring ways to use water discharged during the production of gas. Ken Beegles, a state Division of Water Resources engineer, said some use could be made of gas-field effluent. But in the long run, he said, it wouldn't produce a lot of usable water. Houston Lasater, La Plata County planning commissioner, proposed building more dams to store runoff from the snowpack, which provides water in Southwest Colorado. Other suggestions included finding ways to recycle and use gray water and restructuring water laws that have been on the books for more than a century. After the first round of public meetings, panels of experts in various fields will meet to discuss technical issues to solve imbalances of water supply and demand.

Source: http://durangoherald.com/asp-bin/article generation.asp?article type=news&article path=/news/03/news030904 3.htm

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Public Health Sector

10. September 05, ChannelNewsAsia — SARS source research. New research confirmed civet cats were key spreaders of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus. The animals in Guangdong, China markets had been suspected of being very close to the virus source, a World Health Organization (WHO) official said in May this year. Overall 25 animals were sampled. Among them were six masked civets. All of those six animals were harboring the virus by excreting the virus through saliva or in species. Scientists in Hong Kong and Guangdong have been comparing samples from SARS patients with SARS coronavirus taken from masked palm civets and concluded the Guangdong markets provided a venue for the virus. The study was conducted by 18 scientists from the University of Hong Kong, the Department of Health and the Guangdong Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. Experts said the study gave credence to experts' call for Guangdong to keep its ban on the wild animal trade. The WHO said in August that China's decision to lift a ban on the sale of 54 exotic animals for food was premature.

Source: http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/eastasia/view/48410/1 /.html

11. September 05, Associated Press — Researchers to hand out SARS test kits. Two Singapore labs said Friday they have jointly developed a simple-to-use 15-minute Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) test kit that could potentially help prevent the spread of the virus in poor and remote areas. Officials from a commercial lab and the government-funded Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology told a press conference that the

test is 99 percent accurate in detecting SARS in patients who have been sick for 16 days or more. It works by detecting SARS antibodies in serum or plasma, said Noel Ho, lab spokesman. Numerous types of SARS test kits have already been developed by labs worldwide. Many detect the virus itself, not just antibodies produced in humans to fight it, and can be used before the onset of symptoms. However, these tests require specialized equipment and people trained in clinical lab work. Ho said this test, because it requires no special equipment and minimal training to use, would be ideal for managing outbreaks in remote areas and developing countries. The test, which has not been approved for public distribution, will initially only be sold to hospitals and health care officials. The kits are undergoing clinical trials in Hong Kong and China, Ho said.

Source: http://abcnews.go.com/wire/Living/ap20030905 340.html

12. September 04, U.S. Newswire — New regional centers for biodefense research. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced Thursday grants totaling approximately \$350 million spread over five years to establish eight Regional Centers of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases Research (RCE). The RCEs will support directed research, train researchers and other personnel for biodefense research, create and maintain supporting resources, emphasize research focused on development and testing of vaccine, therapeutic, and diagnostic concepts, make available core facilities, and provide facilities and scientific support to first responders in the event of a biodefense emergency. Each center comprises a lead institution and affiliated institutions located **primarily in the same geographical region**. Research to be conducted by the RCE's includes: Developing new approaches to blocking the action of anthrax, botulinum, and cholera toxins; Developing new vaccines against anthrax, plague, tularemia, smallpox, and Ebola; Developing new antibiotics and other therapeutic strategies; Studying bacterial and viral disease processes; Designing new advanced diagnostic approaches for biodefense and for emerging diseases; Conducting immunological studies of diseases caused by potential agents of bioterrorism: Developing computational and genomic approaches to combating disease agents; Creating new immunization strategies and delivery systems.

Source: http://releases.usnewswire.com/GetRelease.asp?id=109-0904200 3

13. September 04, HealthDay — West Nile toll tops 2000. The West Nile virus surged again across the western half of the United States last week, doubling its death toll and almost doubling the number of people infected by the mosquito-borne virus. According to the latest U.S. government statistics reported Thursday, there have now been 43 deaths and 2,267 human infections in 35 states this year. Exactly a week ago, those tolls stood at 21 deaths and 1,442 cases of infection, which was double the numbers from the previous week. Colorado remains the hardest-hit state, with 940 cases and 11 deaths. Nebraska now has 326 cases and has had eight fatalities. South Dakota has the third-highest number of cases, 250, but only three deaths. Texas and Wyoming round out the Top 5 list, with 164 cases each. Source: http://www.healthcentral.com/news/NewsFullText.cfm?id=514954

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Government Sector

14.

September 05, troydailynews.com — FBI makes drug arrest in Ohio. The FBI, assisted by Troy police officers and Miami County sheriff's deputies, arrested Francisco Javier Gutierrez at his residence in Troy, OH, for violating the federal Controlled Substances Act. Several other simultaneous FBI raids in Dayton led to eight more arrests. Five of the nine were arrested on conspiracy to make and distribute false identification papers for undocumented immigrants, according to the publication. The raids also resulted in the detainment of 23 undocumented immigrants, who could possibly be deported.

Source: http://www.tdn-net.com/articles/2003/09/05/news/news01.txt

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Emergency Services Sector

15. September 05, CNN — London to stage a chemical attack. British emergency services will simulate a chemical weapons attack Sunday, September 7, on a subway train below London's financial district in an effort to test the city's ability to deal with a terrorist strike. The drill, which will last several hours, will see emergency crews put on protective suits to rescue casualties, trapped in a train stopped in an Underground tunnel near Bank station. It will mark the first time a large—scale exercise has taken place in London since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. It is also first time new decontamination units will be seen in public.

Source: http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/09/05/london.attack.dri ll/index.html

16. September 05, FEMA: U.S. Fire Administration — Grant awards announced to aid America's firefighters. Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response, has announced 306 grants to fire departments throughout the U.S. in the thirteenth round of the 2003 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. To date, over 3300 fire departments have received over \$225 million to support their role as first responders in the neighborhoods and communities they serve as firefighters. "Homeland Security through FEMA is working tirelessly to distribute these funds quickly and efficiently," said Under Secretary Brown. "Stories we are hearing about the success of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants and the support this program provides to local communities underlines President Bush's commitment to first responders." The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is administered by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and assists rural, urban and suburban fire departments throughout the United States.

Source: http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/media/2003releases/03-0 90503.shtm

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Information and Telecommunications Sector

17. September 05, Washington Post — Fearing viruses, universities limit Internet access. George Mason University (GMU) administrators temporarily cut off Internet access Thursday, September 4, to 3,600 students in an attempt to protect the school's computer network from viruses and worms on the Internet. School officials had asked students to

update their anti-virus software, install other fixes and sign a statement confirming they had done so. When many failed to comply, network administrators cut off access. At the University of Maryland, more than 6,000 students applied required software patches, but the hundreds who didn't were booted from the university network, said Gerald Sneeringer, of Maryland's Office of Information Technology. At the University of Virginia, some 800 students with infected PCs were knocked offline until they could prove they had installed required fixes.

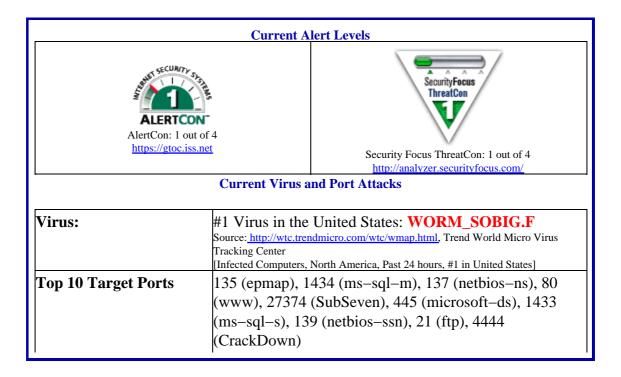
Source: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28520-2003Sep 4.html?referrer=emailarticle

18. September 05, eSecurity Planet — Security holes patched in BlackBerry Enterprise Server. Wireless device maker Research in Motion (RIM) has released an advisory urging IT admins to apply the BlackBerry Enterprise Server 3.6 Service Pack 1a for Microsoft Exchange to plug a denial—of—service hole and password bypass vulnerabilities. The upgrade fixes a bug that causes the server to consume 100% CPU resources in several minutes when handling extremely large PDF documents. It also addresses some errors in the handling of password—protected attachments. In some instances, when multiple users receive an email with a password—protected attachment and a user enters a correct password, RIM warned that a vulnerability allowed other recipients to view the attachment without supplying the password. Additionally, if a user receives a Blackberry e—mail with a password—protected attachment and supplies the correct password, then the user doesn't have to supply the password when receiving subsequent e—mails with the same attachment. It also fixes an issue that caused a DoS scenario if S/MIME encryption protocol is enabled or disabled on a Blackberry Enterprise Server. The upgrade is available on the Blackberry Website: http://www.blackberry.com/knowledgecenterpublic/livelink.exe

http://www.blackberry.com/knowledgecenterpublic/livelink.exe ?func=ll&objId=335557&objAction=browse&sort=name

Source: http://www.esecurityplanet.com/prodser/article.php/3073121

Internet Alert Dashboard



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General Sector

- 19. September 06, Associated Press FBI issues worldwide alert for four men linked to al Qaeda. The FBI is enlisting the world's help to find four men suspected of ties to al Qaeda, including a possible terror cell leader and an avowed suicide attacker. The FBI posted a "seeking information" alert for the four on its Website Friday, September 5, after intelligence corroborated by multiple sources, including foreign governments and law enforcement officials, indicated they might be plotting new attacks against the United States. Posting the names and photos of Adnan G. El Shukrijumah, Abderraouf Jdey, Karim El Mejjati, and Zubayr Al-Rimi on the Internet allows the FBI to spread the word globally, including into lawless areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan where many al Qaeda operatives are believed to be regrouping, officials said. The alert is available on the FBI Website: http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2003-09-06-fbi-alert_x.htm
- 20. September 06, New York Times Hamas placed on terror list by Europeans. European Union foreign ministers said Saturday, September 6, that the union would officially declare all wings of the militant Palestinian group Hamas a terrorist organization and freeze its assets. That decision further isolated Hamas at a volatile juncture in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. It followed a similar decision by the United States last month, and it was prompted by a suicide bombing in Jerusalem on August 19 that killed 22 people. Hamas claimed responsibility for the bombing. France dropped its earlier objections to such a move, which it feared might harm any peace effort between Israelis and Palestinians and deprive Palestinians of important aid and social services.

 $\label{eq:source:http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/07/international/middleeast/07HAMA.html?ex=1063892297&ei=1&en=a618f195fd226e1a$

21. September 06, Reuters — Italy's study sees al Qaeda link to human trafficking. An intelligence report released at the weekend says "terror networks" and groups who traffic in illegal immigrants share a natural overlap, often relying on false documents and intricate logistics, transport and communication setups. "There is the fear, too, that the same routes used for illegal immigration are being used by militants to help form Islamic terrorist groups," says the report, compiled by Cesis, which coordinates the work of Italy's secret services. "Illegal immigration is a filter for drug trafficking, arms and terrorism," Italy's Interior minister Giuseppe Pisanu said on the sidelines of a gathering of business and political leaders in Italy.

Source: http://wireservice.wired.com/wired/story.asp?section=Breaking&storyId=779740

22. September 05, Associated Press — National monuments not safe, report says. The National Park Service has failed to protect some of America's most prominent national monuments and memorials from terrorist attacks, a government report released Friday, September 5, says. The Interior Department's inspector general, Earl Devaney, said the park service has delayed, postponed or ignored steps to protect national "icons," as funding for enhanced security competes with other projects. According to Devaney, "it is imperative that icon park

protection take precedence over all other park concerns." Sites considered icons include the Washington Monument and others along the National Mall; the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall in Philadelphia; and a park that houses a footing of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The inspector general did not identity which parks and monuments were checked, but did note some of the security shortcomings that were uncovered. At some parks, there were no law enforcement officers on duty, facilities left their gates open and unstaffed, and security cameras were installed far away from monuments.

Source: http://abcnews.go.com/wire/US/ap20030905 638.html

23. September 04, U.S. Department of Homeland Security — Maintaining Awareness Regarding Al Qaeda's Potential Threats to the Homeland. Based on a recent interagency review of available information leading up to the September 11th anniversary, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) remains concerned about al Qaeda's continued efforts to plan multiple attacks against the U.S. and U.S. interests overseas. Although the DHS has no specific information on individual targets or dates for any attack, it is known that operatives still at large view attacks on U.S. territory as a priority and that they continue to pursue a range of targets, tactics, and capabilities to accomplish this objective. Al Qaeda's primary intent is to conduct synchronized attacks against U.S. interests. At the same time, recent terrorist incidents

overseas highlight the possibility that al Qaeda could opt to conduct lower—scale attacks against "softer" target sets. Al Qaeda views critical infrastructure targets in the U.S. as attractive attack options because of their potentially significant economic and psychological impacts. These targets include: nuclear power plants and other energy facilities; transportation systems and facilities; water reservoirs and systems; food supply; and electric power grids. Based on this notification, no change to the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) level is anticipated; the current HSAS level is yellow.

Source: http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/press release/press re lease 0238.xml

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DHS/IAIP Products & Contact Information

The Department of Homeland Security's Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection (IAIP) serves as a national critical infrastructure threat assessment, warning, vulnerability entity. The IAIP provides a range of bulletins and advisories of interest to information system security and professionals and those involved in protecting public and private infrastructures. By visiting the IAIP web_site (http://www.nipc.gov), one can quickly access any of the following DHS/IAIP products:

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<u>DHS/IAIP Publications</u> – DHS/IAIP Daily Reports, CyberNotes, Information Bulletins, and other publications

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